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Outrage after Indian man drowns in open pit after begging for help for hours

5 hours ago

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Mumbai

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Yuvraj Mehta's body was recovered hours after he fell into a waterlogged pit in Noida

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Last Friday, at around midnight, Yuvraj Mehta was driving home in Noida, a suburb of the capital Delhi, through dense winter fog when his car reportedly hit a low boundary wall and plunged into the deep pit full of water. The site had reportedly been dug up a few years ago before work was stalled.

Mehta, who didn't know how to swim, climbed on to the roof of his car as it began to sink and rang his father who rushed to the scene and alerted the emergency services. His father told reporters that Mehta remained there for close to two hours, flashing the torch on his phone and shouting for help.

Then, his cries stopped. By the time authorities recovered his body, almost five hours had passed since the accident, local media reported.

Mehta's tragic death has made national headlines, and the fact that it happened so close to the capital city has shocked and angered residents. Protests have been held at the accident site, with demonstrators accusing authorities of negligence and demanding accountability.

His death has also fuelled larger questions about the state of Indian roads and urban planning.

"Noida techie's [Mehta's] death is essentially a murder. Dreams shattered. Hard work gone in vain. Father's hopes buried. All because of a failed system," one user wrote on

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Some users shared their own experiences of accidents because of bad roads, lack of adequate signage and poor lighting after dark. Some also complained about open drains and construction sites on roads close to their homes becoming death traps, especially for children and the elderly.

ANI

After the accident, police have erected barricades near the construction pit

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On Sunday, the government of Uttar Pradesh state, where Noida is located, removed a senior official from the township's governing authority and ordered an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the rescue operation and site safety.

Since then, police have arrested Abhay Kumar, one of the owners of the construction site, for alleged culpable homicide due to negligence under India's criminal code. Kumar is in custody and has not commented on the allegations.

Police have said that further investigations are under way and that more arrests are likely in the coming days.

In media interviews, Mehta's father Rajkumar has said that he received a call from his son soon after the accident happened. He rushed to the spot but said that the site was pitch dark and shrouded in fog, and that his son was barely visible in the murky waters.

He alerted the police and the fire brigade and said that rescue teams arrived at the site shortly after. But he alleged that his son remained stranded for hours because they did not have the resources to pull him out.

He added that his son's life could have been saved if trained divers were sent to retrieve him, but that did not happen.

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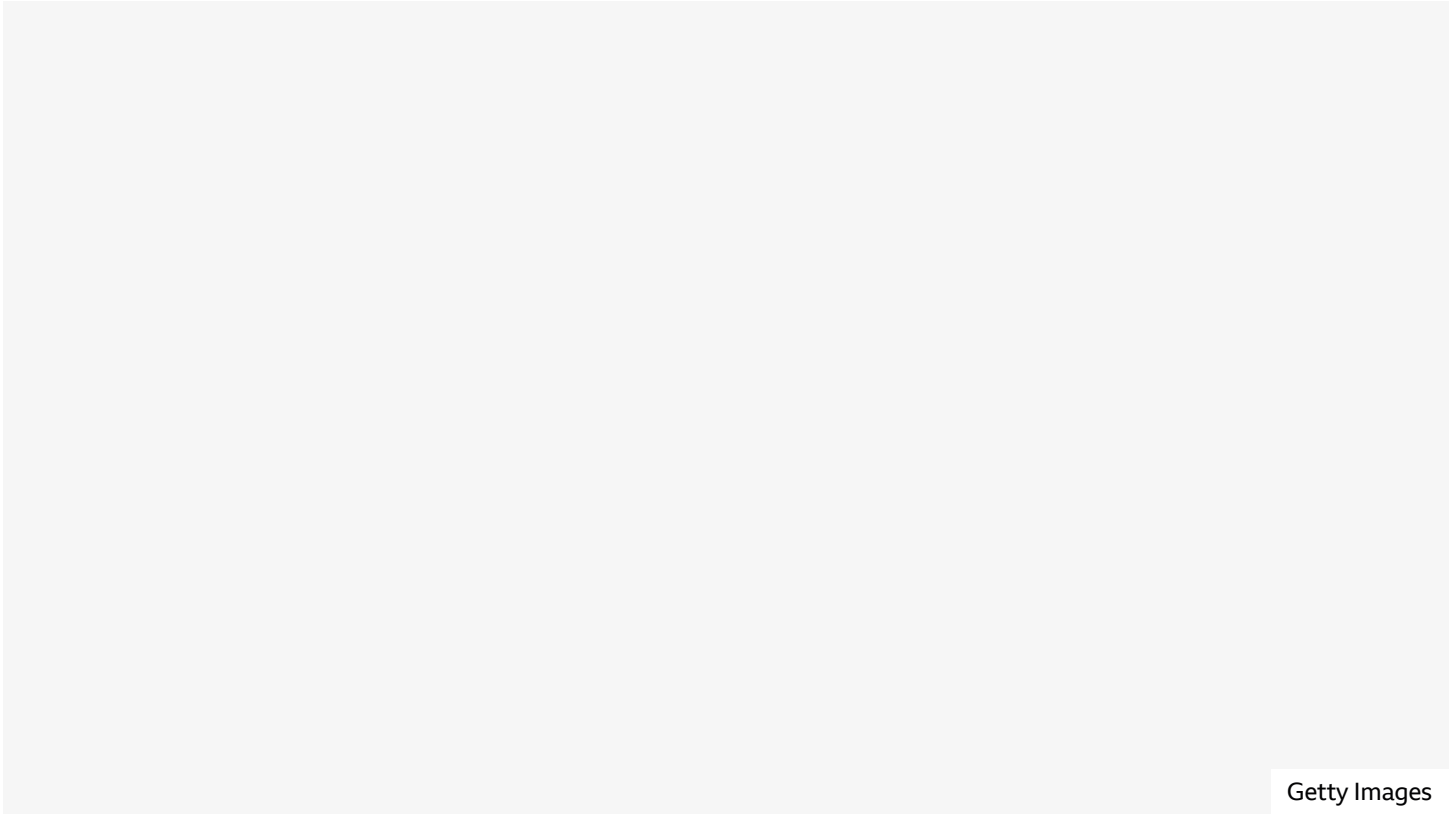

Getty Images

Many roads in India are in a bad shape

Moninder, who goes by one name and is a delivery worker for an e-commerce platform, was passing by and reportedly made a brave attempt to save Mehta. He tied a rope around his waist and jumped into the freezing water to pull him out, he told Hindustan Times newspaper..

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"Police and fire department teams made efforts to save the youth. A fire department crane, ladder, makeshift boat and searchlights were used, but there was zero visibility at the time," he told Times of India newspaper and added that further investigation was under way.

Hemant Upadhyay, assistant commissioner of police for Noida, told British newspaper The Independent that no-one was sent into the pit because officers were concerned about further casualties if untrained personnel were sent in.

"The water was very deep, visibility was poor and there were concerns about submerged debris," he said.

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